

Introduced by Senator Speier

February 24, 2006

An act to add Section 49605 to the Education Code, relating to pupil counseling, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1731, as amended, Speier. Guidance counseling: funding.

Existing law authorizes the governing board of any school district to provide a comprehensive educational counseling program for all pupils enrolled in the schools of the district.

This bill would ~~make an appropriation of \$100,000,000~~ appropriate \$36,400,000 from the General Fund to the State Department of Education for the purpose of increasing the number of guidance counselors in *certain* public schools including kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. *The bill would prohibit the use of the amount appropriated to supplant existing funds used to pay for specified school guidance counselor costs.* The bill would make related declarations and findings, as well as a statement of legislative intent.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 49605 is added to the Education Code,
- 2 to read:
- 3 49605. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 4 following:

(1) California ranks ~~50th~~ *51st* among the 50 states *and the District of Columbia* in guidance counseling support for pupils.

(2) California has ~~a total of only 6,400 less than 7,000~~ guidance counselors for more than six million pupils in public schools including all or any of kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. In California public schools there is an average of one counselor per ~~954~~ *906* pupils.

(3) The American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of an average of one counselor per 250.

(4) In 2003, the California Department of Education studied the level of pupil support services provided in public schools including all or any of kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. The department found that 306 school districts out of 985 in the state failed to provide even one guidance counselor to their pupils.

(5) School districts overwhelmingly recognize the need for more guidance counselors and have identified district budget limitations as a major obstacle to increasing their numbers.

(6) Studies have identified a direct correlation between pupil performance and access to adequate guidance counseling.

(7) In order for California's ratio of ~~one~~ guidance counselors per ~~1000~~ *pupils* to reach the national average, ~~the number of guidance counselors would need to double. California school districts would need to hire nearly 6,000 new guidance counselors.~~

(8) In order for California's ratio of guidance counselors to reach the national average, school districts require approximately ~~\$650~~ *\$400* million in additional education funding.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature to double the number of guidance counselors in public schools including any or all of kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, over the next five years, or sooner if fiscally possible, and to provide pupils with the guidance counseling they need to prepare for the future.

~~(e) The Legislature hereby appropriates one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000)~~

(c) The amount of thirty-six million four hundred thousand dollars (\$36,400,000) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund in fiscal year 2006-07 to the State Department of Education in order to increase the number of guidance counselors in all public schools including any or all of kindergarten and

1 ~~grades 1 to 12, inclusive.~~ *provide one credentialed guidance*
2 *counselor for each middle and junior high school ranked in*
3 *deciles 1 to 3, inclusive, on the Academic Performance Index.*
4 *(d) Funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall not be*
5 *used to supplant existing funds used to pay for the salary or*
6 *benefits, or both, of a school guidance counselor.*

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